

CU Boulder visiting professor defends election fraud claims while criticism mounts

John Eastman calls chancellor's condemnation libelous

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Visiting University of Colorado Boulder Professor John Eastman is not backing down from claims of widespread election fraud that earned him [condemnation](#) from [CU leaders](#) last week as members of the academic community continue to speak out against him.

Eastman's statements at a Wednesday rally for President Donald Trump in Washington, D.C., have been criticized by Chancellor Phil DiStefano, members of the CU Board of Regents and professors from CU Boulder and Chapman University, where he is a tenured faculty member.

At the rally, Eastman talked about "secret folders" of ballots in voting machines that were used to defraud the election but did not provide any evidence for his claims.

Eastman later told the Camera that proof of election law violations were contained in lawsuits filed by Trump or his campaign against Pennsylvania and Wisconsin election officials.

He also cited a letter by a Georgia Republican senator asking Trump to send cybersecurity experts to investigate Georgia's election and a civil lawsuit filed by Trump against the Georgia Secretary of State for certifying the state's election results after one county refused to certify its own results.

The Pennsylvania and Wisconsin lawsuits center on election officials in those states expanding mail-in voting. The allegations by the Georgia senator allege that problems with voting machines in Fulton County that required ballots to be reviewed by election officials must be investigated, that an increase in votes cast for Biden on election night was vote totals being "switched" mid-count and that people claim they can hack into voting machines.

The results of the 2020 election have been certified by all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and Colorado state officials from across the political spectrum have testified to the security of the state's voting system.



John C. Eastman (University of Colorado Boulder / Courtesy photo)

In a statement provided to the Camera, Eastman said DiStefano's letter to campus Thursday was defamatory and false.

"And saying that I have 'contributed nothing of value to support the ideals of either the Benson Center or CU Boulder' is preposterous, as I have provided an alternative voice on campus, well rooted in the law, just as I was asked to do — both with my own public lecture in October as well as the significant speaker series that I was ask to organize," Eastman wrote.

DiStefano's statements "are not only libelous per se, but appear to be malicious as well, and therefore actionable," Eastman wrote.

Eastman said he is "considering all options" with regards to whether to file a lawsuit against CU Boulder.

In an email, CU Boulder spokesperson Andrew Sorensen said the university stands by DiStefano's statement.

Eastman is the visiting scholar in conservative thought and policy at the Benson Center for the Study of Western Civilization and is scheduled to teach two courses for the spring semester.

In a Benson Center newsletter emailed Saturday, Director Daniel Jacobson also criticized Eastman's claims of election fraud.

"I find these claims irresponsible for two reasons: the lack of evidence produced to support them and, especially, the context in which they were expressed. Claims of a stolen election are exceedingly serious and should only be made when they can be backed up with solid evidence," Jacobson wrote.

Eastman has asserted but has not produced evidence of fraud, Jacobson wrote, few of the claims have held up in court and most have not been presented under oath.

"The serious procedural issues concerning changes made to state election laws are overshadowed by lurid allegations of rigged voting machines and irrefutable statistical evidence of fraud — none of which have been supported with tangible evidence," Jacobson wrote. "While these unsupported allegations are worrisome on their own, they become substantially worse when they are stated to a crowd gathered outside the Capitol in protest. I condemn the riot that followed these speeches unequivocally."

While Eastman's speech was protected by the First Amendment and did not call for violence, Jacobson wrote that he was "deeply disappointed" with Eastman's claims and the circumstances under which he made them.

"The primary responsibility for the violence in our nation's capital lies with those who committed it. However, this year has illustrated the danger of public figures, including public intellectuals, who make excuses for political violence or make public statements that exacerbate dangerous situations. There has been too much playing with fire," Jacobson wrote.

Additionally, more than 140 Chapman University faculty members signed an open letter published in the Los Angeles Times on Saturday calling for Eastman's removal from campus.

"(His actions) should disqualify him from the privilege of teaching law to Chapman students and strip him of the honor of an endowed chair," the letter stated. "Eastman spouted lies about 'secret folders' to fire up an angry crowd and stood approvingly next to Rudy Giuliani as he called for 'trial by combat.' These conspiratorial claims of a stolen election were the basis of the insurrection."

Tags: [2020 election](#),
[University of Colorado](#)



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Katie is a Colorado native and graduated from the University of Northern Colorado with a bachelor's degree in journalism in 2014. After covering K-12 and higher education on the Western Slope, she joined the Daily Camera in 2019. She writes about the University of Colorado system, CU Boulder and higher education in Boulder County.

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